Australia from June 28 to July 7 to explore opportunities for Indian companies in the mining sector in Australia;

(c) if so, to what extent visit of the Indian delegation has helped to cooperate with Australian Government in mining;

(d) what are the agreements signed between these two; and

(e) to what extent Australia has agreed to help and assist India in mining?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) Yes, Sir. An India-Australia Joint Working Group on Energy and Minerals had been constituted under the aegis of the India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission. The purpose of this Working Group is to facilitiate the exchange of information and understanding of energy and minerals policy issues and to promote trade and investment in energy and mineral resources.

(b) The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with the Australian Trade Commission had organised a 15 member mining mission to Australia from 28th June to 7th July, 2005.

(c) The Members of the delegation got an opportunity to have interaction with the Australian Trade Commission, Federal Government, Western Australian State Government, Queensland State Government, mining Institutes, mining companies, mining equipment manufacturers and mining software companies.

(d) The proposals and discussions are at initial stages and no agreement has been signed so far.

(e) Australia has indicated their desire to cooperate with the Indian Mining Sector in the field of mineral exploration, supply of state-of-the-art technology and training.

Non-clearance of mining leases

2758. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government's effort to mop up resources

by involving investors in mineral based industries is geting delayed because of non-clearance of mining leases by Government;

(b) whether according to the Jharkhand Mines and Geology Department claims that 24 proposals worth Rs. 12,000 crores are awaiting Government's nod; and

(c) if so, the reasons for delay in clearing these projects and by when a final decision by Government would be taken to implement the proposals of Rs. 12,000 crores by the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. DASARI NARAYAN RAO): (a) to (c) The applications for grant of mining leases are received and processed by the State Governments. Mining leases are granted by the State Government concerned in accordance with the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and Rules made thereunder which prescribe detailed procedure and conditions for grant of mineral concessions. Only for a select number of minerals specified in the First Schedule to the aforesaid Act, prior approval of the Central Government is required before grant of mineral concessions by the State Governments. Even in cases of prior approval, the grant of mining lease and execution of lease deed with the lease-holder is done by the concerned State Government as per the laid down procedure under the Act and the Rules framed thereunder. At present, 16 proposals for grant of mining lease received from State Government of Jharkhand are pending for prior approval with the Cenral Government. Out of these, additional information/clarification is awaited from the State Government in respect of 14 cases and remaining 2 cases are under process in the Ministry. Thus, in majority of the cases, the proposals are pending with the Central Government for want of additional information/clarification from the State Government of Jharkhand.

Disinvestment of NALCO

†2759. SHRI UDAY PRATAP SINGH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for disinvestment of the National Aluminium Co. (NALCO) has been submitted to his Ministry; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and his Ministry's response thereto?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.